

IOWA BIRD LIFE

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IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *Iowa Bird Life* and *I.O.U. News* are quarterly publications of the Union.

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SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Institutions may subscribe to *Iowa Bird Life* for \$15 per year. Individuals may join the Iowa Ornithologists' Union according to the following membership classes: Regular (\$12); Regular as spouse or minor child of another Regular member without publications (\$4 first additional family member, \$2 each additional family member); Contributing (\$12 plus any additional tax-deductible contribution to the I.O.U.); and Life (\$250 as single payment or \$62.50 for each of four years). Members will also receive the quarterly *I.O.U. News* and are eligible to vote and hold office in the Union. Send subscriptions, membership payments, or address changes to Francis L. Moore, Treasurer, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand printed in ink on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS OF IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

*16-18 September 1988, Fort Dodge

FIELD REPORTS

Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

- *Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)—3 March (W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653)
- *Spring (Mar, Apr, May)—3 June (to be announced)
- *Summer (Jun, Jul)—3 August (James J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)
- *Fall (Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov)—3 December (Carl J. Bendorf, 825 7th Ave, Iowa City, IA 52240)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

*Deadline for receipt of reports: 15 January. For forms and instructions write: W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.

IOWA BIRDLINE 319-338-9881

The birdline is a recorded summary of interesting recent bird sightings in Iowa. At the end of the report you can leave a message and report recent sightings. Be sure to give your name and phone number as well as the location of the bird and date seen. Call in as soon as possible after sighting a rare bird. Jim Fuller checks the reports daily and updates the recording on Monday, so make sure Sunday sightings are reported by Sunday night.

I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056).

MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following materials may be obtained by writing the editorial office (Iowa Bird Life, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246):

- *Order form for back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*: send self-addressed stamped envelope.
- *Field Checklist of Iowa Birds—1987 Edition: 10 for \$1.65, 25 for \$3.50, 100 for \$11.60, postpaid. Also available at annual meetings for \$0.10 each.

REPORTING NEBRASKA BIRDS

Sightings of Nebraska birds, including those within the Nebraska portion of De Soto N.W.R., should be reported to Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005. Formats for reporting and documentation are the same as for Iowa.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please send address changes/corrections to Francis Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703.

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BIRDING RIVERTON AREA

W. ROSS SILCOCK

Riverton Area, affectionately known to birders as "Riverton", is a 2,414 acre Public Hunting Area just northwest of the town of Riverton in southcentral Fremont County. The varied habitat includes lake, swamp, marsh, mudflats, upland fields, riparian woods, multiflora hedgerow, weedy and brushy areas, and spring-fed open water in winter. A large number of species can be seen here, especially during migration peaks for waterbirds.



The area is located between the East and West Nishnabotna rivers, just north of their confluence. Spring Creek flows into the area from the northeast. Water levels in the area are controlled by a pumping station on the West Nishnabotna River. In years when the water levels are high due to heavy rains, shorebirding is particularly good as water levels recede. The excess water usually drains and evaporates fairly rapidly.

Riverton is one of the best spots for shorebirds in the upper Midwest, and certainly one of the best spots in Iowa. Shorebirds that are more abundant in the Missouri than the Mississippi flyway (American Avocet, Hudsonian Godwit, White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper) are often found in large numbers.

Access to the area is limited during hunting season and when the road that circles the area is impassable due to wet conditions. The area is traversed by dikes and waterways that can only be reached by walking, as driving is only permitted on the outer roadway. Shorebirds are most abundant on the mudflats of the north end. The lake harbors grebes, pelicans, cormorants, geese, and ducks. Woodland birds are found along the southwest side. The area can be covered in a few hours, or one can take all day.

One can enter the area from the southwest or northeast. The following description will start at the headquarters area (1) on the northeast side, which is 2.0 miles north of the east edge of the town of Riverton on L68. Follow the gravel north of the ranger's house. On the hill to the west is an observation platform where one can get a panoramic view of the area and check for the best water areas. Past the observation platform, the road winds downhill to a spring surrounded by brush and trees (2). This spot attracts passerines in any season, and is good for Harris' and White-crowned Sparrows in winter. Both meadowlarks and Grasshopper Sparrow breed on the surrounding hill-sides.

Park at the corner where the road turns north (3) and walk past the "No Unauthorized Vehicles" sign to the main east-west dike. The east side of the dike (4) is bordered on north and south by extensively vegetated marsh where rails and bitterns can be found. Late April is a good time for close observation of American Bittern. The west side of the dike (5) crosses mudflats, especially on the south side, and is the best location for shorebirds when the water levels are right. There is a greater variety of shorebirds here in late April than in any other area of the state, and numbers and variety increase even more in May. Fall may produce spectacular concentrations of shorebirds at Riverton, because most other water areas are dry or overgrown at this time of year. In late summer, especially August, herons and terns con-

gregate in the flats and along the waterways. Least Tern, Snowy Egret, and Yellow-crowned Night-Heron are found with some regularity. From the east-west dike, one can access the north-south dikes or follow the water's edge in pursuit of birds, as conditions dictate. Spring Creek and a high dike prevent access to the lake to the south, except at the east end of the dike when conditions are dry (see description of areas 9, 10).

After returning to your vehicle at location 3, go north 0.5 miles and west 0.5 miles to a north-south waterway (6). This is a reliable spot for Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, especially at dusk in late summer. The marsh to the south is good for rails.

At the northwest corner of the area, the road passes open fields where Horned Lark is present all year, and then runs on a dike bordering the riparian habitat of the West Nishnabotna River until reaching the pump house. To the east and south of the pump house, a lane leads to the waterfowl check station that resembles a small green house (7). Park near the martin house and, at the "No Unauthorized Vehicles" sign, begin a walk to the lake (you can go for about a mile, but shorter walks are also productive). The lane leads east, down a hill, and out on to a large dike passing riparian woods, ponds, marsh, open lake, and mud flats. A large variety of species can be found, especially in spring.

The dike winds north and then straight east as it forms a dam for the lake (8). With a telescope one can scan the shorebird flats to the north. The spring-fed lake frequently has open water in December, providing close views of rare waterfowl such as Ross' Goose and Greater Scaup. Look for Ross' Goose in with the Mallards and away from the hordes of Snow Geese.

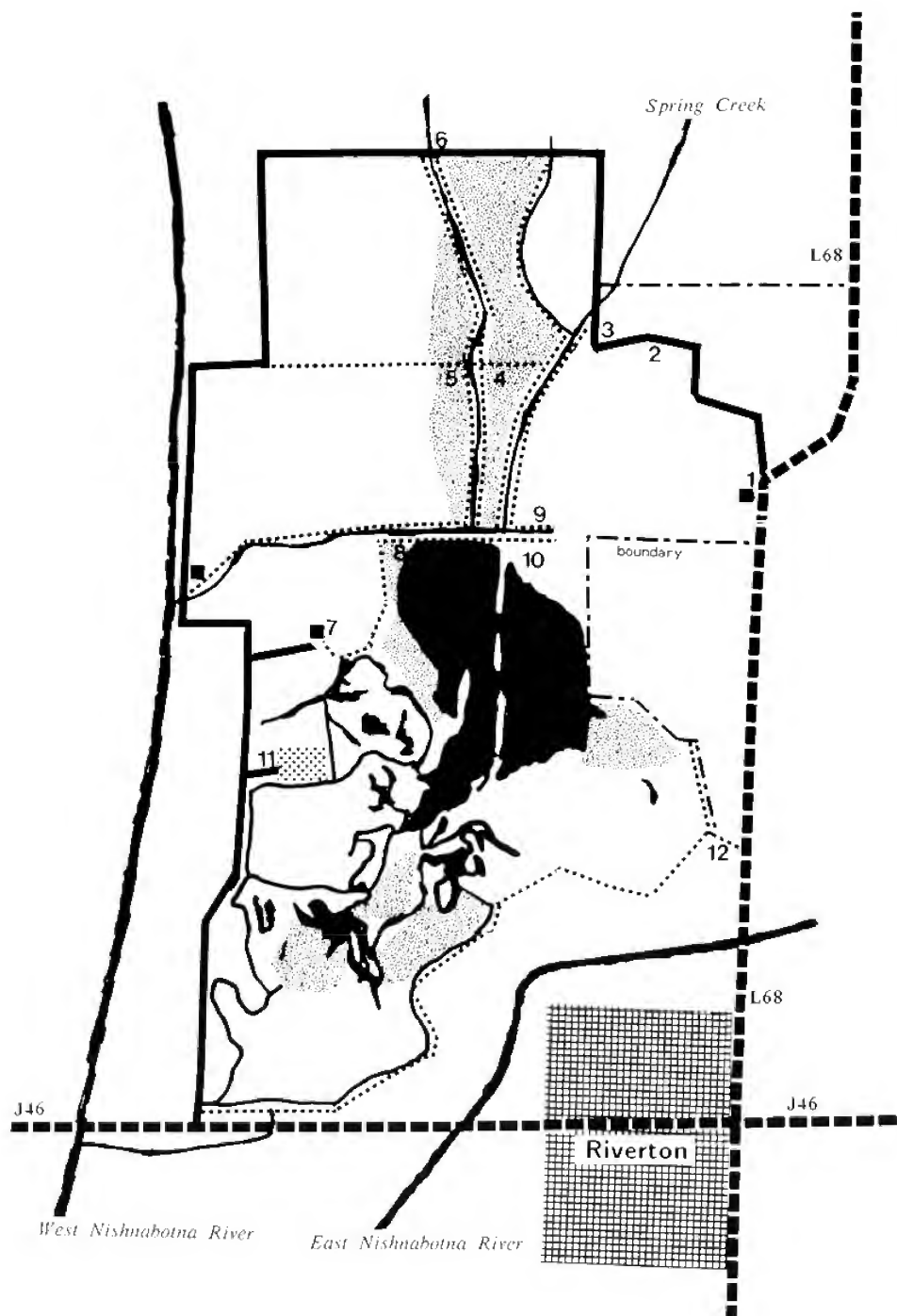
At the far end of the dike on the north side there is a marsh (9) that is good for rails, and on the south side there is a patch of riparian woods (10) that traps migrant warblers and sparrows. Up to 20 Bald Eagles roost here in December. Farther east, one can check some conifers and a wooded draw.

After returning to the check station, go 0.4 miles south to a large low-level parking lot and boat ramp on the east of the dike (11). One can launch a canoe into the narrow, swampy waterways to the east or walk ill-defined paths for up to 0.5 miles into the swampy woods in pursuit of warblers. With a little luck, one can find the Willow Flycatcher, Prothonotary Warbler, and American Redstart that are resident here. Waders and insect repellent are recommended.

From the boat ramp it is about a mile on the dike to J46 and another mile east to the edge of Riverton. Winter birders seek warmth and food at the Aterfo Cafe.

The south side of the Riverton Area can be accessed from a dike (12) that starts from L68 (0.8 miles north of J46). The dike runs along the south edge of woods and leads to fields surrounded by woods that are good for sparrows and raptors.

Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653



RESPONSE TO RECORDS COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRE

THOMAS H. KENT

Don Roberson, Secretary of the California Bird Records Committee, recently sent a questionnaire to the various state and provincial records committees in North America in preparation for a talk at the American Birding Association meeting. My responses to his questions provided an opportunity to review the activities of the Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and are reproduced here.

When did your Committee become established?

1980

What birds do you review?

The Committee reviews: (1) all records of species currently defined as Accidental on the state list or not on the state list; (2) other current records as requested by the Field Reports and CBC editors of *Iowa Bird Life*; and (3) old records for species that are undergoing review by the Committee or others.

Accidental species are those seen in the state in fewer than 3 or 4 years of last 10 at the time of the last updating of the state list by the Committee. The latest official list of Regular, Casual, Accidental, Extirpated, and Extinct species is the 'Official Checklist of Iowa Birds 1986 Edition' (*Iowa Bird Life* 56: 46-55). At present the status of Ferruginous Hawk in Iowa is uncertain, so all records of this species are reviewed. Prairie Falcon records are reviewed if the observer did not see black axillars. Almost all documentations arrive via the four seasonal Field Reports editors and CBC editor. Out-of-season birds that are difficult to identify or poorly documented (e.g., Broad-winged Hawk on CBC) tend to get reviewed. We have reviewed old records for species that have no extant specimen, but this was done in 1980-1982 during the writing of *Iowa Birds* (Dinsmore, Kent, Koenig, Petersen, and Roosa, 1984).

Over the eight years of the Committee's operation, a number of species have moved up from Casual (seen at least 8 or 9 of last 10 years) to Regular and from Accidental to Casual. This occurred because of more and better coverage of the state, an expansion of gull populations, and movement of Great-tailed Grackle and House Finch into the state.

Are you the "official" keepers of the state list? If not, who is?

Yes, this is a permanent charge to the Committee.

How many members are there on your Committee and how do they become members?

There are six members and a Secretary. The six members serve staggered six-year terms (one change per year) and the Secretary serves at the pleasure of the other six members without a defined term. A member is limited to two consecutive terms, but may sit out a year and be reappointed. The Committee nominates replacement members by secret ballot and submits the nomination(s) to the Board of Directors of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. The Board can accept the nomination or appoint someone else (so far, they have always accepted the Committee nominees). Criteria for serving on the Committee are stated in the By-laws.

The rationale for our selecting these methods of choosing members is based on the following: (1) We don't have lots of active birders in Iowa compared to some other states, and we have no highly recognized experts, so we wanted long terms for stability. (2) We didn't want the Committee to stagnate, and we wanted to use membership on the Committee as a means to increase the expertise of Iowa birders. The length of the terms have turned out about right, with half of the turnovers coming from resignations due to moving or decreased interest, and the other half coming from expiring terms. The secretary and two others have been on the Committee since 1980. (3) We wanted the Committee to pick new members, because the Committee has the most knowledge of who would do a good job. But we wanted some outside control (Board of Directors) in case the Committee became too insular.

How often does your Committee meet? How is attendance?

The Committee usually meets for an hour to several hours at the annual spring and fall I.O.U. meetings, and occasional special meetings are held (more when we were reviewing old records). Typically all members attend, but about half of the time one person is not able to make it. Meetings deal with nominations, committee procedures, and re-review of records.

Are your procedures governed by bylaws? If so, please enclose a copy. If not, what procedures are used to run your committee?

Procedures are governed by bylaws (*Iowa Bird Life* 56:111). We allowed for an officer other than the secretary, but so far there has been no enthusiasm for having a chairperson. The secretary plans and runs meetings, distributes materials, and keeps the minutes and records. Committee business and procedures are by majority vote. Records require six of seven positive votes to pass.

How is a record reviewed by your Committee?

Documentations are received by the secretary from the Field Reports editors and the CBC editor, usually in batches 2-3 weeks after close of the season (1 Mar, 1 Jun, 1 Aug, 1 Dec). [The Iowa Field Reports editors write a report for *Iowa Bird Life* and send the summary data and documentations to the Regional Editor of *American Birds* for the Middlewestern Prairie Region.]

Records to be reviewed, as determined by the secretary or requested by the Field Reports editors, are assigned a consecutive yearly number (e.g., 88-17) and the basic data are entered into a computer file by the secretary. When there are enough records to make a batch or there is a need to have a fast review, the secretary prints a work sheet by computer, makes photocopies of all records for each committee member, and mails the batch. We started out using rotating circulation, but found this a little slow and members did not have a copy of the documentation when it came time to re-review a record. The cost and convenience of photocopying all records seemed worthwhile, but we don't have as many to review as California does.

Members review the records and enter comments on the work sheet. Members are not supposed to consult each other, but are free to talk to anyone else. Members abstain if they found the bird (unless they want to vote no), but vote on birds someone else found that they went to confirm. Many of the good birds are seen by a majority of members on the Records Committee.

When all of the votes and comments have been returned to the secretary, a summary of the voting and all of the comments are typed into the computer file and the results of the review of the batch are printed.

Records that need to be re-reviewed (those with less than unanimous acceptance, but more than a majority accepting) are either recirculated (usually with the next batch) or discussed and voted on (by secret ballot) at a meeting. Sometimes documentations are circulated without photographs and the photographs are reviewed at a meeting. On other occasions the photographs are duplicated and circulated, depending on how obvious the identification is and how expensive it is to duplicate the photos. Often committee members have already seen the photos.

The second review is usually the final one, but further consideration or soliciting of outside opinions is done for difficult records.

The second review vote and comment is entered into the computer and a fresh printout of completed records is sent to the member who is designated for the year to send feedback to the contributors. A form is used for the feedback and the committee's comments are paraphrased.

After all records for a year are finished (usually 5 or 6 batches), a report of accepted and unaccepted records is published in *Iowa Bird Life*. The report is usually written by the secretary and the person doing the feedback and usually appears in the Summer issue of *Iowa Bird Life*, about eight months after the end of the year.

A record that has been accepted or rejected may be reviewed again if agreed to by a majority of the Committee, but this usually requires new information about the record or about the species.

Does your Committee have additional requirements to add a species to the state or provincial list other than acceptance of the record as just outlined?

No. You will see a "hypothetical" list in *Iowa Birds*. These were mainly based on old records that were not well recorded, but were seen by reliable observers (e.g., a Red Phalarope in breeding plumage). In the last printing of the state list we left off the hypotheticals, but not all members were ready to throw them out entirely. If a sight record is accepted, it goes on the state list. The list, however, has a designation for the highest level of evidence.

Does your Committee review specimen-supported records?

Yes. We treat a description of a specimen as a sight record. We have tried to examine and photograph all specimens of accidental species. Lost specimens previously examined by reliable experts are designated as sight records. A specimen that has been examined by a committee member and photographed is considered a specimen record (e.g., a Brant shot and mounted by a hunter, but kept by the hunter).

Do you have any other categories of records that should be mentioned (e.g. photo-supported records distinct from sight records)?

Records supported by existing tangible evidence are labeled I-S for specimen record, I-P for photographic record (photo must be published or on file with the Records Committee), and I-R for a record supported by a recording on file with the Committee (Alder Flycatcher is the only example). Species and/or individual records with three or more acceptable documentations are labeled Class II; other acceptable sight records are Class III.

We also have three categories for records that are not accepted. We use IV for records that are probably correct, but the evidence, the bird, or the view leave a shadow of a doubt. We use V for records that do not have enough evidence to make a decision. We use VI for identifications that we believe are incorrect or very unlikely and for escapes. We have not found an acceptable means for handling possible escapes.

How are your decisions published?

A report of all records reviewed for a given year is published each year in *Iowa Bird Life*; i.e., all the birds were seen in the given year. Results of old records reviewed in the current year are also given along with any resultant changes in the state list.

What is your current average acceptance rate?

From 1980 through 1986 the number of records reviewed each year ranged from 25 to 41 (mean 33) with acceptance rate ranging from 54 to 78 percent (mean 67 percent). The number of records reviewed has remained steady after the first two years with no change in acceptance rate. Some species that accounted for a lot of the records reviewed in the early years are no longer reviewed (e.g., Smith's Longspur, House Finch). I suspect that the low acceptance rate compared to California may be due to several factors: documentations are not sent directly to the Committee; inexperienced observers are encouraged to submit documentations; and we only review regular and casual species when there is some doubt or the date is unusual (as compared to California's Committee reviewing records for all species seen four or fewer times per year).

Do you deal with only recent records or have you attempted to review rarities of the past?

As mentioned above, we have reviewed all records of species for which there is not a current specimen. The other old records of accidental species are less formally reviewed in *Iowa Birds*. The Committee reviews old records when requested.

Do you review introduced populations to determine if the species should be added to the state or provincial list? If so, what criteria do you use?

Yes. We don't have a big problem here. Three species (Rock Dove, Eurasian Starling, and House Sparrow) are probably the three most common resident species in the state. Wild Turkey (a re-introduced former resident), Gray Partridge, and Ring-necked Pheasant are all common, well-established residents. We have accepted House Finch without any discussion of whether the population is derived from birds introduced on the East Coast. We started out talking about the ten-year rule for accepting introduced species, but I think we would consider this too arbitrary now. Trumpeter Swans, from the introduced Minnesota population that are now migrating, will be our next problem species as far as introduced birds are concerned.

Possible escapes have given us more of a problem. So far, we have rejected records of Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, and Painted Bunting in winter.

Does your Committee require or encourage records to be on an official report form? If so, please enclose a copy.

Yes. I don't know how official the form is--the Committee has reviewed it from time to time, but we have not labeled it "Official". The form is sent out with CBC forms and Big Day contest forms, and it is available on request. Some people have a facsimile in their computer. Most documentations use the essence of our form, but some use forms that do not fit our style. The Committee will review any information on an Accidental species that is at all reasonable. If I were to be limited to one rule, it would be no pencils and no worn out computer ribbons.

I agree with the California Committee about not prompting for a description of the bird, but there is certain ancillary information that would often be left out if not prompted for. My personal preference is for descriptions that record observations in the order that they were made--that tells something about the viewer's thought process and tends to get the most outstanding and important features first. For example, if looking at a peep I might look at the leg color first, but with a phalarope I might look at the bill first and forget to look at the legs until I had looked at other parts of the bird.

What is the level of cooperation you receive from observers, considering your state or province as a whole?

Most of the regular observers who report their records on a seasonal basis know which birds need to be documented and do so. There are still some good observers who do not seem to know which birds to document or are reluctant to do so, but they also tend to be the same people who do not send in regular reports. The Field Reports editors do not publish records of Accidental species that are not documented. Since the Field Reports are published prior to review of records by the Committee, the editors have to make a judgment as to the acceptability of the record. If the record seems highly likely to be accepted it is published with details and with a note solicited from the observer. Otherwise, mention is made that the species was reported and will be reviewed without citing date or place, thus avoiding the possibility of later citations on birds that are not accepted. The price we pay for timely publication is an occasional citation of a bird that the Records Committee rejects. We have good communication with Bruce Peterjohn, the Middlewestern Prairie Region Regional Editor for *American Birds*. He gives us his opinion on borderline cases and tends to accept the opinion of our Committee (i.e., he is willing to publish a correction). Many records that would be reviewed according to the California selection criteria are handled by the Field Reports editors with some surveillance by the Editor of *Iowa Bird Life* (who happens to be the Secretary of the Records Committee).

What is the level of acceptance of your decisions in your area? What do you perceive to be the level of acceptance of your decisions continent-wide?

We have not had any rebellions, but neither have we had groundswells of enthusiasm. I think the decisions of the Committee are generally accepted, but some individuals have obviously been unhappy about having a record turned down. I think the standards for acceptance have increased slightly over time. The two most common reasons for turning down a record are that the bird was not seen well enough and that the observer was not able to commit to paper all of the things that were seen. It is easier to accept a

nonacceptance for a bird not seen well than for one that was probably correct but not well described. Sometimes observers do not seem to be aware of how rare or out-of-season a bird is, and, therefore, do not adequately exclude other possibilities.

There isn't a great demand for our decisions on a continent-wide basis, but the American Birding Association, the Regional Editor of *American Birds*, and DeSante and Pyle in *Distributional Checklist of North American Birds* have respected our decisions.

What do you see as the biggest problem now facing your Committee?

The Committee would like to see more active and informed birders in Iowa, so we are considering involving the Committee more directly in educational activities of the I.O.U. Improvement in the quality of documentations would be very helpful. We need to convince many observers to document birds rather than leaving it up to the "hotshots". Many still look on documentation as a chore or a threat, rather than as a contribution to science or as self-education. My own experience has been that documentation is the single thing that has most improved my birding skills. We continue to have bird identification problems, but I don't consider this a "problem"--it is what makes the sport of birding appealing.

In reviewing records, what is the biggest problem with the records submitted?

I would concur with the California experience--not enough description of the bird. Describing a bird is not easy, so getting better at it is a matter of education and experience, not enforced compliance. From a personal viewpoint, the techniques that have helped me most include: (1) describing the bird while watching it (I find a cheap, tape recorder helps a lot, because I don't write well in a field notebook and I can talk while watching); (2) learning the anatomy of the birds so I can use the right words to describe what I see; (3) realizing that I need to determine the sex and moult, if possible; and (4) being honest with myself in describing what I see and not what I thought I was supposed to see (Surprisingly, this is the most difficult).

Another common problem is delay in documenting a bird. Some ask, "should I document this bird," rather than taking notes first and asking later. Delayed documentation always raises the problem of whether perceptions changed with time or were influenced by looking at books and talking to other birders.

What would you say are the most controversial issues currently before your Committee (feel free to give specific examples).

I wouldn't say that we have any really pressing issues, but some of the difficult ones include what to do with introduced birds and possible escapes. We have had some problems determining whether a bird was in Iowa or another state (*Iowa Bird Life* 55:79-80, *Birding* 18:174).

211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

REPORT OF RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1987

THOMAS H. KENT

The Records Committee reviewed one old record (not accepted) and 35 records from 1987 (19 accepted). Three species were added to the state list: Ancient Murrelet, Groove-billed Ani, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. The committee plans to meet in 1988 to reconsider committee procedures and discuss issues facing the committee.

Committee members for 1987 with years in which their term expires were: Barbara L. Wilson (1988), Peter C. Petersen (1989), W. Ross Silcock (1990), Robert K. Myers (1991), Francis L. Moore (1992), Carl J. Bendorf (1993), and Thomas H. Kent, Secretary (appointed by other members). Steve Dinsmore (1994) replaces Wilson in 1988. Myers resigned from the Committee early in 1988 and will be replaced.

OLD RECORDS

Lesser Goldfinch: A report of this species from Sioux City on 16 Jan 1964 (*South Dakota Bird Notes* 16:102-103) was discovered by Jim Dinsmore and reviewed by the committee. The majority of the committee felt that the description did not exclude winter-plumaged American Goldfinch, which was not illustrated in the popular field guides at that time.

1987 RECORDS ACCEPTED

Brant: An immature of the eastern subspecies was caught at Red Rock Res. on 4 Oct (*IBL* 58:17, 24-25) and photographed for the third state record.

Jaeger species: An immature dark jaeger at Saylorville Res. on 27 Oct (*IBL* 58:19) was observed under poor viewing conditions.

Franklin's Gull: 1 in breeding plumage at Keokuk on 16-17 Jan (*IBL* 57:55) was described in detail by two observers and is the first January record for Iowa.

Thayer's Gull: An adult at Keokuk on 3 Jan (*IBL* 57:56) was likely the same adult accepted for that location for 20 Dec 1986 (*IBL* 57:56, 77). One or more first-winter birds were at Saylorville Res. from 2 to 30 Dec (*IBL* 58:56).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 adult was photographed at Iowa City on 31 Jan and another seen at Bettendorf on 4 Feb (*IBL* 57:56).

Great Black-backed Gull: 1 first-year bird at Saylorville Res. on 30 Apr (*Robert K. Myers) presented an identification problem. The size, white head, and other features were convincing to the committee. A first-winter bird at Saylorville on 7 Nov (*IBL* 58:20) occurred at a more expected time.

Ancient Murrelet: Iowa's first record for this vagrant from the Pacific Ocean at Crystal Lake, Hancock County, on 28 Oct was not totally unexpected and was well described by a single observer (*IBL* 58:20, 59).

Groove-billed Ani: Iowa's first well-documented record of this long-overdue fall vagrant from the Gulf Coast was present at Jacob Krumm W.A. from 19 Oct to 25 Nov. It was seen by many and extensively photographed (*IBL* 58(1) cover, 58:20, 26, *American Birds* 42:17).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: A hummingbird coming to a feeder in Marshalltown from 21 Dec to late Dec represents a first winter record for Iowa (*IBL* 58:48, 56). Although it was seen by many, it was only documented by one observer. It was said to have died in captivity after being caught, but no specimen was available for examination. The committee thought that the possibility of other vagrant hummingbirds should have been considered, more information given on how long the bird was present, more extensive descriptions made by several observers, photographs taken when it was caught, and the specimen preserved. Nevertheless, the committee was satisfied that the single documentation adequately excluded Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

Rufous Hummingbird: Two males were photographed, one at a St. Olaf, Clayton Co., feeder for the second year in a row from 29 Jul to 3 Aug (*IBL* 58:20, 27) and the other at Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo Co., on 18 Aug (*IBL* 58:20).

Water Pipit: A 19 Dec Christmas Bird Count record at Rathbun Res., Appanoose Co. (IBL 58:46) presented an interested identification problem. Two thorough documentations were convincing in spite of the bird's pale legs.

Dickcissel: A feeder bird on 24 Jan (IBL 57:57) was well-described and is Iowa's first winter record.

Great-tailed Grackle: A Christmas Bird Count record on 19 Dec from Story Co. (IBL 58:46, 48, 58) was well-described by two observers.

Northern Oriole: 1 that later over-wintered was documented at a Johnson Co. feeder on 19 Dec (IBL 58:46, 48, 58).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: A pair at West Branch, Cedar Co., from 14 Mar to mid-Apr was Iowa's first. They were documented by many and photographed (IBL 57:86, 95).

1987 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

Pacific Loon: A small loon in late fall (IBL 58:17) presented a difficult identification problem. Ronald E. Goetz of Webster Groves, Missouri, reviewed the documentations and commented, "...the head as described is perfect for juvenile Red-throated Loon, including the gray throat patch, contrast between head and back, and lack of any darker patterning within the head." He further noted that the diagnostic back pattern of juvenile Red-throated Loon can only be seen at very close range and that the perception of the upcurved lower mandible can vary with the posture of the bird. Based on the evidence, the committee did not reach a firm conclusion on the identity of this bird.

Clark's Grebe: This species continues to be a difficult identification problem. A fall report (IBL 58:17) described light gray flanks, white clearly extending well above the eye and touching the base of the upper mandible, and bill color not well seen but apparently pale. The committee received information from Don Roberson, Pacific Grove, California, on identification of Clark's Grebe. He said, "A pale bill is not a good description of Clark's Grebe; indeed, it fits Western better. Clark's has a bright yellow-orange bill in all plumages—indeed Californians I know consider it the single best field mark....Flank color is basically useless, in my opinion, given over to how the feathers are preened and arranged. A significant percentage of Western Grebes have white lores, particularly a white loreal spot." Iowa observers should pay particular attention to bill color (including the conditions of observation, since this is a difficult observation to make) and should describe and draw the pattern of white on the face.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: The committee had no question about the identification of 1 near Boone, Boone Co., on 29 May (IBL 57:119) based on both description and photographs. The committee is not accepting whistling duck records in Iowa at this time, because it is uncertain whether they are vagrants or escapees.

Barrow's Goldeneye: A spring male goldeneye (IBL 57:81) had the characteristic black band extending down the shoulder, but the characteristic head shape was not clearly described and the facial crescent was equivocal in shape.

Mississippi Kite: A brief spring observation (IBL 57:81) was not adequate to be sure of the identification.

Broad-winged Hawk: A hawk with a banded tail on a Christmas Bird Count (IBL 58:48) was insufficiently described to exclude any of the much more likely hawks with banded tails (e.g., Red-Shouldered, Cooper's).

Prairie Falcon: 2 birds in Cherokee Co. on 28 Jul (IBL 57:120) seemed extremely unlikely because this species does not usually travel in pairs and has not been reported from Iowa in summer in recent years. Black axillars were not seen. The committee could not be sure of a positive identification based on the description.

Black Rail: A brief look at dusk of a bird flying from a ditch into a corn field (IBL 57:82) left room for doubt.

Laughing Gull: Two summer reports from reservoirs (IBL 57:120) were more likely first-summer Franklin's Gulls. Bruce Peterjohn of Westerville, Ohio, reviewed these records and commented, "...description of the partial hood was perfect for a [first-summer] Franklin's Gull. Laughing Gulls have a more variable head pattern in this plumage. Most have no black at all, rather a poorly defined grayish-brown collar of variable width across the back of the head. A minority will have some black feathers mixed with gray collar. A few will even have fairly extensive black heads, but white feathers scattered throughout and give a mottled appearance to the head rather than a clear cut partial hood." He goes on to note, "While some [first-summer] Franklin's Gulls will have a few white terminal mirrors on the primaries, many do not and have entirely black primaries similar to a Laughing Gull."

Thayer's Gull: 1 at Red Rock Reservoir on 3 Jan (IBL 57:56) was withdrawn by the documenter due to the great distance at which the bird was observed.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: A December bird (IBL 58:56) was not seen well enough to see the leg color or determine the age of the bird.

Steller's Jay: A description of a summer bird (IBL 57:122) by a visitor with some birding experience was suggestive of this species. Committee members could not suggest what this bird might have been, and several had doubts that Steller's Jay would be either a vagrant or an escapee in Iowa.

Painted Bunting: A male at Bettendorf on 6 Jan (IBL 57:57) was photographed; the committee had no doubts about the identification. This species is recognized as a spring vagrant (overmigrant) in the East, Mid-west, and West and to a lesser extent as a fall vagrant. Winter records from the East Coast could be vagrants from the eastern population of this species, but winter records of males in California are considered escapees. There are no Mid-west records from December through March. Males were once common in captivity, but laws have been said to have eliminated this practice over the last two decades. The current record was not accepted as a vagrant on a split vote.

Eastern Meadowlark: A Christmas Bird Count record from Muscatine Co. on 26 Dec (IBL 58:46, 49, 58) provided a typical description of a non-singing Eastern Meadowlark. After two reviews, the majority of the committee felt that sight identification of meadowlarks in winter is likely to be somewhat unreliable, and such observations should not be used to determine the winter distribution of Eastern Meadowlark. Winter identification of Eastern Meadowlarks should be based on voice (call note is best) and/or specimens (probably not as good as voice).

Northern Oriole: 1 at Davenport on 13 Dec (IBL 58:58) was accepted by three members and not considered by four members because copies of the original, which was itself a copy, were not considered legible. At a future meeting, the committee will consider what to do with documentations that are illegible or copy poorly.



*Male House Finch and female Purple Finch,
Glenwood, 12 March 1988. Photo by Doug Rose.*

FIELD REPORTS--SPRING 1988

ROBERT K. MYERS

WEATHER

Is it my imagination or are the descriptions of spring weather for the past several years starting to sound very familiar? Again this year, three words tell the whole story—warm, windy and dry. With the exception of a brief cool period at the end of April, most parts of the state recorded temperatures averaging well above normal for the period. The month of May was the 9th warmest on record for Des Moines. One seemingly consistent feature this spring was the wind. It hardly ever quit blowing. Most winds in May were from the southwest. Warm to hot temperatures plus a strong wind and no rain add up



to very dry conditions. The first four months of 1988 were the driest in 30 years in southwest Iowa and the driest since weather records were first kept 99 years ago in southeast Iowa. Des Moines had 3.8 inches of precipitation by 1 June, which is 8 inches below normal. Overall, the first five months of 1988 were the third driest on record for Iowa. Only 1934 and 1925 were drier. Obviously, with such dry conditions, not many weather fronts and storm systems moved across Iowa this spring. One of the few weather systems that did penetrate the state was quite notable, however. On 8 May, Mother's Day, 23 tornadoes dropped out of Iowa skies—the largest number of twisters ever reported for the state in one day.

GENERAL TRENDS

It doesn't take a lot of thought to come up with problems for birders caused by hot, windy, dry weather. Trees leaf out early and this makes it more difficult to locate small birds such as warblers. I don't know of many birds or birders who like strong winds. Wind makes feathers blow, branches sway, tripods jiggle, and muffles birds' songs. The dry spring made shorebird habitat hard to come by. There were not many flooded fields or mud flats. The best shorebirding areas were marshes and lakes that had dried down exposing stretches of mud along the edges. This condition may have actually worked to birders' advantage as shorebirds were concentrated in fewer areas.

In spite of the way I've made it sound, spring 1988 was not uneventful for Iowa birders. Perhaps the strong southwest winds of May played a role in guiding some of the very rare finds to the state. Most active birders did well even though they may have worked a little harder to tally big lists this year. Good species lists were certainly found. Among other notable totals, Bery Engebretsen found 24 species of waterfowl on 18 March at Saylorville Reservoir and Pete Petersen identified 20 species of warblers in a four hour period on 12 May in Muscatine and Scott counties.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Maybe the weather was responsible or maybe there were just more good Iowa birders out there looking, but, in any case, many very interesting

species were found this spring. Four accidental species were reported: Snowy Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Vermilion Flycatcher, and Townsend's Warbler. Casual species included Red-necked Grebe, Surf Scoter, Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren, Great-tailed Grackle, and House Finch. Other rare but regular species reported included Western Grebe, Snowy Egret, Cinnamon Teal, Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter, Prairie Falcon, King Rail, Sandhill Crane, Red-necked Phalarope, Glaucous Gull, Prairie Warbler, Henslow's Sparrow, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

SPECIES DATA

* = documented; record early/late dates are given in [].

Common Loon: 1 was near Ames on 18 Mar (Paul Sleeper fide SD) [3rd earliest]. Another was early at Big Creek S.P. on 30 Mar (MPr). Most reports were from Apr with the peak of 12 at Saylorville Res. on 9 Apr (SD); 1 remained at Saylorville Res. on 22 May (SD).

Pied-billed Grebe: 1 was very early at Big Creek S.P. on 5 Mar (MPr).

Horned Grebe: 1 was at Saylorville Res. on 8 Mar (SD) [2nd earliest]. Other reports included 3 at Sioux City on 22 Mar (BH), 2 at Lock and Dam 9 in Allamakee Co. on 26 Mar (MJH), 1 in Appanoose Co. on 3 Apr (RLC), and a peak of 4 at Saylorville Res. on 12 Apr (SD).

Red-necked Grebe: Two reports included 1 at Saylorville Res. on 12 Apr (*SD) and 1 at L. Manawa on 14 Apr (*BLW, *BPa, LPa).

Eared Grebe: 1 was early at Oakland on 27 Mar (SD); 2 were somewhat unusual in E Iowa at Muskrat Sl., Jones Co., on 16 May (THK, CJB, FLM). Peak was 6 at Saylorville Res. on 15 May (SD); 1 was still at Big Wall L. on 22 May (SD).

Western Grebe: The only report was of 1 at Rush L., Osceola Co., on 18 May (MMB).

American White Pelican: 16 were at Red Rock Res. on 11 Mar (SD) [3rd earliest]; 4 were also early at Saylorville Res. on 24 Mar (SD, BE). Peaks were 800 at Bays Branch on 9 Apr (SD) and 1,000 at Runnells Game A. on 16 Apr (JSi).

Double-crested Cormorant: Many reports were received this spring. Earliest were 4 at Lock and Dam 13, Clinton Co., on 20 Mar (PCP), 8 at Saylorville Res. on 22 Mar (SD), and 1 at Montrose on 30 Mar (RCe). The peak was 1,300 at Saylorville Res. on 17 Apr (SD).

American Bittern: Reports included 1 at Coralville Res. on 18 Apr (JF), 4 at Pickeral L. on 28 Apr (MMB), 5 to 10 at Otter Creek M. on 4 May (NAK), 1 at Otter Creek M. on 13 May (THK, CJB, FLM), and 1 at Muskrat Sl. on 16 May (FLM).

Least Bittern: The only report was 1 at Otter Creek M. on 16 May (JF).

Great Blue Heron: 1 near Iowa City on 12 Mar (JF) was the first. Peak was 100 at Sabula on 20 Mar (PCP).

Great Egret: 1 was at Davenport on 25 Mar (Larry Fisher fide PCP) [3rd earliest]. Others were also early with 1 at Fort Madison on 29 Mar (RCe), 1 at Saylorville Res. on 29 Mar (SD), and 1 at Cardinal M. on 30 Mar (MJH). Peak was 18 at Otter Creek M. on 29 Apr (NAK).

Snowy Egret: Details were received for 1 near Forney L. on 29 Mar (SD).

Little Blue Heron: Four reports: 1 at Runnells Game A. on 17 Apr (JSi), 1 at Union Grove S.P. on 28 Apr (BPr, MPr), a calico imm. at L. Manawa on 3 May (BLW, BPa), and 1 at Big Sand Mound on 12 May (PCP).

Cattle Egret: Nine reports covered the state; 1 was at Willow Sl. on 27 Mar (*SD) [3rd earliest]. Peak was 5 in Des Moines Co. on 4 Apr (Jeff Bergman fide RCe) and in Page Co. on 31 May (BLW).

Green-backed Heron: First were 2 at Grammer Grove on 4 May (MPr). Peak was 3 at Riverton on 5 May (DoR). Others reported were 1 at Sioux City on 15 May (JJ) and 1 in Jefferson Co. on 21 May (DCP).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 2 were early at Willow Sl. on 27 Mar (SD); 5 were at Little Clear L. on 4 Apr (MMB). Most reports were from 7 Apr to 11 May but 7 were still at Union Slough N.W.R. on 30 May (MCK).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Four reports, all in May, were 1 at Brenton Sl. on 6 May (SD), 2 at Ledges S.P. on 10 May (SD), 1 at Saylorville Res. on 15 May (SD), and 1 at Burlington on 29 May (JF).

Tundra Swan: First reports were 1 at Iowa City on 14 Mar (Bob Berry fide JF) and 1 at Hendrickson M. on 17 Mar (SD). Most others were reported from early Apr with exception of 1 at Rush L., Palo Alto Co., on 28 Apr (MMB).

Greater White-fronted Goose: Many crossed Iowa between 11 and 20 Mar. E Iowa had 20 at Coralville Res. on 19 Mar (THK) and 6 in Clinton Co. on 20 Mar (PCP). C Iowa had the most with 1,500 at Hendrickson M. on 17 Mar (SD), 2,100 at Saylorville Res. on 18 Mar (SD), and 500 at Runnells Game A. on 19 Mar (JSi); 3 remained at Cone M. until 10 May (THK).

Snow Goose: The largest concentrations reported were 10,000 at Red Rock Res. on 11 Mar (SD) and 15,000 at Lakin Sl. on 19 Mar (SD). These are large numbers for C Iowa.

Ross' Goose: Details were supplied for 34 birds from W and C Iowa. The most were found at Red Rock Res. with 13 on 11 Mar (SD) and 9 at Hendrickson M. on 17 Mar (SD); 1 remained at Bays Branch on 31 May (SD).

Canada Goose: Nest sites were found at seven different C Iowa locations (SD).

Wood Duck: 2 were at Snyder's Bend on 4 Mar (BH). No large concentrations were reported.

Green-winged Teal: First was 1 in Howard Co. on 8 Mar (MJH). Peak was 230 at Cone M. on 24 Apr (THK).

American Black Duck: 3 were at Saylorville Res. on 16 Mar (MPR); 1 of 2 at De soto N.W.R. on 17 Mar (BLW) appeared to be a mallard/black duck hybrid. Three May reports included 1 at Coralville Res. on 10 May (THK), 2 at Rush L., Palo Alto Co., on 15 May (RVH), and a female at Riverton A. on 29 May (SD, details).

Mallard: 1 mallard/pintail hybrid was noted at Big Creek S.P. on 5 Apr (SD).

Northern Pintail: A pair remained at Cone M. on 10 May (THK) and 3 were still at Howard Co. on 17 May (MJH).

Blue-winged Teal: First was 1 at Willow Sl. on 6 Mar (SD). Others were early with 1 at Hendrickson M. on 23 Mar (MPR) and 2 at Bacon Creek P. on 23 Mar (BH).

Cinnamon Teal: 1 male was seen at Union Slough N.W.R. on 17 and 25 May (Jim Gallagher fide JJD). Another male was in Dallas Co. on 23 Apr (EaA, EIA).

Northern Shoveler: Peak was 100 at Cone M. on 24 Apr (THK).

Gadwall: First were 142 at Saylorville Res. on 13 Mar (BE). Peak was 2,000 at Little Clear L. on 4 Apr (MMB).

American Wigeon: Peak was 2,000 at Little Clear L. on 4 Apr (MMB).

Canvasback: Reports included 600 at Saylorville Res. on 11 Mar (BE), 2,200 at Saylorville Res. on 13 Mar (SD), and 800 in Clinton Co. on 20 Mar (PCP); 11 remained at Montrose on 31 May (RCe).

Redhead: Several stayed late with 1 at Carlisle on 16 May (JSi) and 4 at Montrose on 31 May (RCe).

Ring-necked Duck: First and most were 8,900 at Saylorville Res. on 18 Mar (SD). There were three mid- to late May reports: 1 at Swan L., Johnson Co., on 16 May (THK), 225 at Pony Creek, Mills Co., on 19 May (DoR), and 3 at Montrose on 31 May (RCe).

Greater Scaup: 97 were reported. The first were 4 at Montrose on 1 Mar (JF) and the last were 2 at Montrose on 6 May (THK, RCe) and 2 at Big Creek S.P. on 22 May (*SD) [record latest]. Peak was 19 at Red Rock Res. on 11 Mar (SD). Details were supplied for almost all reports.

Lesser Scaup: The peak was 4,000 at Lock and Dam 13, Clinton Co., on 20 Mar (PCP).

Oldsquaw: An imm. was found on Saylorville Res. on 3 Mar (SD). A pair were found at the same location on 22 Mar (SD, BE); 1 found at Saylorville Res. on 29 Apr was probably the same bird that was at Big Creek S.P. on 3 May (*SD) [record latest].

Surf Scoter: 1 at Ventura M. on 22 May (*JP, *RJH) [record latest] was seen by many at the I.O.U. spring meeting.

White-winged Scoter: 2 lingered at Montrose to 6 May (THK, RCe), and 1 was still there on 31 May (*RCe) [record latest].

Common Goldeneye: 1 was at IPL Ponds on 25 May (SD) [3rd latest].

Bufflehead: 1 was at Big Creek on 22 May (SD) [record latest].

Hooded Merganser: First were 2 at Snyder's Bend on 4 Mar (BH). Many were reported from mid-Mar through Apr with peak of 27 at L. MacBride on 17 Mar (JF).

Common Merganser: Most reported was 8,360 at Saylorville Res. on 18 Mar (SD).

Red-breasted Merganser: First report was 4 at Saylorville Res. on 2 Mar (SD). Peak was 149 at Red Rock Res. on 2 Apr (SD). Last report was 1 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 20 May (SD).

Ruddy Duck: 6 were at Saylorville Res. on 2 Mar (SD) [record earliest]. Peak was 105 at Montrose on 5 Apr (RCe).

Turkey Vulture: First were 1 at Forney L. on 19 Mar (DoR) and 4 at Cone M. on 20 Mar (THK).

Osprey: Early this year were 1 at Coralville Res. on 2 Apr (JF), 1 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 3 Apr (MCK), and 2 at Saylorville Res. on 3 Apr (SD).

Bald Eagle: A total of 329 were reported. Largest numbers were 134 (55 ad. and 79 imm.) at Red Rock Res. on 11 Mar (SD), 70 at Snyder's Bend on 20 Mar (BH), and 52 (24 ad. and 28 imm.) at L. Manawa on 2 Mar (BPa); 1 was on a nest near Bellevue 17 May (PCP).

Northern Harrier: First were 3 at Runnells Game A. on 19 Mar (JSi). A pair were seen many times at Hayden Prairie and a nest with five eggs was found and photographed on 23 May (Lynell Hanson fide MaP).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Few reports were received. First was 1 at Grammer Grove on 2 Mar (MPR). Another was in Warren Co. on 5 Mar (JSi).

Cooper's Hawk: 6 were reported from C and W Iowa. First was 1 in Mills Co. on 5 Mar (BLW); 1 was found on a nest in Woodland Mounds, Warren Co., on 8 May (JSi).

Northern Goshawk: 1 was documented in Howard Co. on 13 Mar (*MJH) and details were provided for 1 in Black Hawk Co. on 22 Mar (FLM). Another report did not supply details.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 6 reports from across the state included 1 at Ledges S.P. from 14 to 17 Mar (*DRe), 1 at Princeton M. on 20 Mar (PCP), 1 at Polk City on 20 Mar (SD), 1 near Union on 22 Mar (MPR), 1 in Iowa City on 26 May (JF), and 1 at Stone P. on 1 May (DET).

Broad-winged Hawk: No large concentrations were noted. The first were 12 in Appanoose Co. on 16 Apr (RLC). Peak was 34 in Story Co. on 30 Apr (SD); 3 were still at Yellow River F. on 28 May (FLM).

Swainson's Hawk: 18 were reported; 1 was at Union Slough N.W.R. on 27 Mar (*MCK) [2nd earliest]. A pair came back to George Wyth S.P. on 30 Mar (FLM) but no nest was found. A pair nesting in same spot since 1978 in Osceola Co. were first seen on 20 Apr (DBi).

Ferruginous Hawk: A report is referred to Records Committee.

Rough-legged Hawk: The last was 1 in Greene Co. on 9 Apr (MPR).

Golden Eagle: Single immatures were at Polk City on 19 Mar (SD, details), at Ledges S.P. on 25 May (*DRe), at Coralville Res. on 26 Mar (*THK), and in Allamakee Co. on 8 Apr (RPB, details).

Merlin: Details were given for singles at Sheldahl on 20 Mar (SD) and in Polk Co. on 3 May (PM) [ties 3rd latest].

Peregrine Falcon: 14 were reported. Three reports on 15 May establish a new late date: 2 at Saylorville Res. (SD, details), 1 at Hendrickson M. (HZ, PM, both with details), and 4 at Stone P. (DET, details); 1 was also late at Coralville Res. on 12 May (THK, details).

Prairie Falcon: 1 was reported from the Ringgold W.A. on 22 Apr (*PCP) [3rd latest].

Gray Partridge: Birds somewhat out of normal range were 2 in Mills Co. on 9 Apr (BLW) and 2 in Johnson Co. on 30 Apr (RJH).

Ruffed Grouse: 1 was seen near Stratford, Hamilton Co., in late Mar (Clayton Swanson fide JJD). Some were released in this area years ago.

Northern Bobwhite: 1 was a little out of range near Melvin, Osceola Co., on 24 May (DCH). Barb Wilson reports them as common in SW Iowa.

King Rail: 1 was heard at Otter Creek M. on 30 Apr (THK) and another 1 was heard at Cone M. on 13 and 16 May (THK, CJB, FLM).

Virginia Rail: Peak numbers were 8 at Otter Creek M. on 23 Apr (JF) and 6 at Big Wall L. on 1 May (SD).

Sora: 1 was at Doolittle Prairie on 1 Apr (SD, details) [record earliest]. Peak was 58 at Big Wall L. on 1 May (SD).

Common Moorhen: Four reports of singles were from Lee Co. on 10 May (RCe), Union Slough N.W.R. on 20 May (SD), Anderson L. on 22 May (SD), and Swan L., Johnson Co., on 25 May (JF).

American Coot: The first 2 were at Snyder's Bend on 4 Mar (BH).

Sandhill Crane: 1 was at Big Creek S.P. on 15 Mar (SD, BE); 1 was at Coralville Res. on 17 Mar (JF); 2 were found at Union Slough N.W.R. on 23 Apr (Jim Gallagher fide JJD); and 4 were at Cone M. on 13 May (THK, CJB, FLM) [ties record latest].

Black-bellied Plover: All reports were between 11 May and 27 May. The largest number at any one place was 2.

Lesser Golden-Plover: Details were given for 3 that were early at Big Creek S.P. on 22 Mar (SD). Others were also early with 1 in Howard Co. on 23 Mar (MJH) and 1 at Big Creek S.P. on 25 Mar (BE). Peak was 1,000 at Big Wall L. on 10 May (SD).

Semipalmated Plover: 3 were early at Hendrickson M. on 20 Apr (SD). Peak was 68 at Bays Branch on 10 May (SD).

Piping Plover: 1-2 were found at Saylorville Res. on 23 Apr, 8 May, 12 May (SD, BE); 3 were at IPS Ponds (Sioux City) on 5 May (JJD); 1 was at Bays Branch on 12 May (JF); and 2 nests were found at IPL Ponds in late May (SD).

Snowy Plover: Documentations have been referred to Records Committee for two sightings, 1 at Bays Branch on 6-7 May (*SD, *RKM, *THK, *FLM) and 1 at Dunbar Sl. on 22 and 25 May (*ASF, *SD, *BBI).

Killdeer: First report was 1 at Snyder's Bend on 4 Mar (BH).

American Avocet: Three reports were 20 at L. Manawa on 26 Apr (BPa), 1 at Dunbar Sl. on 13 May (SD, MPr), and 3 at Bays Branch on 16 May (RKM).

Greater Yellowlegs: 1 was at Riverton A. on 6 Mar (*SD) [record earliest]. Peak was 40 at Coralville Res. on 30 Apr (THK). Details were also given for 1 at Forney L. on 29 May (SD).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Early reports include 1 at Saylorville Res. on 22 Mar (SD), 3 at Hendrickson M. on 23 Mar (MPr), and 5 at Walton L. on 27 Mar (DCP). Peak was 66 at Hendrickson M. on 25 Apr (HZ).

Solitary Sandpiper: 1 was at Hendrickson M. on 7 Apr (SD) [3rd earliest]; late birds were in Green Co. on 22 May (SD) and at Union Slough N.W.R. on 24 May (*MCK) [2nd latest].

Willet: Most were reported between 23 and 29 Apr. Peaks were 18 at Saylorville Res. on 23 Apr (SD) and 11 at Hendrickson M. on 29 Apr (MPr).

Upland Sandpiper: Reports covered most of the state including 2 at Walter's Prairie, Osceola Co., on 26 May (DCH). Peak was 14 in Greene Co. on 8 May (SD).

Hudsonian Godwit: Several observers commented that they saw more than ever. Three reports totaled 80 or more: 80 at Forney L. on 7 May (THK), 80 at McCord Pond, Guthrie Co., on 13 May (MPr), and 284 in Greene Co. on 10 May (SD).

Marbled Godwit: It was a banner year for this species including 11 at Saylorville Res. on 9 Apr (SD, RKM) [3rd earliest]. Steve Dinsmore reported 33 between early Apr and mid-May. Peak was 21 at Bays Branch on 20 Apr (RKM). Details were provided for most of the 85 birds reported.

Ruddy Turnstone: Singles were at Hendrickson M. and McCord Pond on 8 May (HZ, SD) [3rd earliest]. Peak was 4 at Saylorville Res. on 15 May (SD).

Sanderling: Peaks were 7 at Coralville Res. on 12 May (JF) and 4 Nashua on 19 May (FLM); the last was at Blue L. on 26 May (SD).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 1 was found among a large group of sandpipers at Riverton A. on 27 Mar (*SD) [record earliest]; 2 were reported from Hendrickson M. on 13 Apr (SD) without details. Peak was 419 at Saylorville Res. on 15 May (SD).

Western Sandpiper: Details were given for 4 at Bays Branch on 6 May (SD, RKM) and for 3 at Saylorville Res. on 13 May (BE); all were in alternate plumage.

Least Sandpiper: Early were 3 at Hendrickson M. on 26 Mar (SD) and 16 at Riverton A. on 27 Mar (SD).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Peak was 420 in Fremont Co. on 24 May (SD).

Baird's Sandpiper: 1 was seen at Coralville Res. on 13 and 19 Mar (*JF, *THK) [record earliest]. Also early were 3 at Saylorville Res. on 25 Mar (SD) and 104 at Riverton A. on 27 Mar (SD). Peak was 116 at Saylorville Res. on 15 May (SD).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Details for were given for 1 at Riverton on 6 Mar (SD) [3rd earliest]. Peak was 1,000 at Coralville Res. on 10 Apr (THK).

Dunlin: All reports were between 13 and 24 May. Peak was 147 at Saylorville Res. on 15 May (SD).

Curlew Sandpiper: Documentations have been referred to Records Committee for 1 found at Coralville Res. on 13 May (*CJB, *THK, *FLM, *JF, *PCP).

Stilt Sandpiper: Details were supplied for 1 at Hendrickson M. on 13 Apr (SD) [record earliest]. Peak was 75 at Coralville Res. on 13 May (THK). Last was 1 at Blue L. on 26 May (SD).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: The only report was of 2 at Nashua on 19 May (FLM).

Short-billed Dowitcher: 2 identified by call in Boone Co. on 26 Apr (SD) [ties record earliest]. Details received for a peak of 135 in Greene Co. on 10 May (SD).

Long-billed Dowitcher: 2 were identified by call at Hendrickson M. on 26 Mar (SD) [3rd earliest]; 3 were at Coralville Res. on 12 May (THK) [3rd latest]. This year all reports were supported by details.

Common Snipe: First was 1 at Sioux City on 29 Mar (BH).

American Woodcock: The first were at Laurens (RVH) and Saylorville Res. (BE) on 11 Mar; 4 were at L. Manawa on 17 Apr (DoR).

Wilson's Phalarope: 1 was early at Saylorville Res. on 23 Apr (BE). The peak was 138 in Guthrie Co. on 10 May (SD).

Red-necked Phalarope: 1 was found at Dunbar Sl. on 25 May (MPr, PCP).

Franklin's Gull: 1 was at L. Manawa on 1 Mar (BLW, BPa) [2nd earliest]. Also early were 1 at Saylorville Res. on 11 Mar (BE) and 1 at Coralville Res. on 13 Mar (JF). Peak was 250 at Saylorville Res. on 11 May (SD).

Bonaparte's Gull: 1 was early at Saylorville Res. on 26 Mar (BE). Peak was 626 at Saylorville Res. on 21 Apr (BE); 1 was still at Saylorville Res. on 22 May (SD).

Herring Gull: An injured bird was still at Coralville Res. on 13 May (THK).

Glaucous Gull: 2 were reported at L. Manawa on 5 Apr (*RES) [record latest].

Casplan Tern: Details were given for 1 at Saylorville Res. on 19 Apr (SD, BE) [record earliest]. Peak was 77 at Forney L. on 24 May (SD).

Common Tern: Details were supplied for 2-4 birds at Saylorville Res. from 26 Apr to 15 May (SD). Details also supported 9 in Louisa Co. on 19 May (PCP).

Forster's Tern: 1 was at Union Slough N.W.R. on 11 Apr (*MCK) [3rd earliest]. The peak was 114 at Saylorville Res. on 26 Apr (SD).

Least Tern: Most reports were from far W Iowa, with a peak of 13 at IPL Ponds on 31 May (SD). The exception was 1 at Big Creek S.P. on 27 May (SD).

Black Tern: First were 10 in Howard Co. (MJH) and 1 at Big Wall L. (MPr) on 1 May. Peak was 300 at Saylorville Res. on 10 May (SD).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Singles arrived early this year at Hickory Hill P., Johnson Co., on 3 May (*THK) [record earliest], at Grammer Grove on 6 May (BPr), and in Appanoose Co. on 7 May (RLC), and at Ames on 7 May (Ellen Snyder fide JJD). Peak was 15 at Dudgeon L. on 16 May (JF).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: First was 1 at Hickory Hill P. on 9 May (THK).

Burrowing Owl: 2 were reported with details, 1 in Lyon Co. on 18 Apr (DBi) and 1 in Dallas Co. on 10 May (SD). Another was reported without details.

Long-eared Owl: 11 were reported. The most were 5 at Saylorville Res. on 11 Mar (BE). A road kill was found in Page Co. on 8 Apr (BLW); 1 was still at Laurens on 25 Apr (RVH).

Short-eared Owl: Reports included 1 at Hendrickson M. on 3 Mar (HZ), 2 at Teig's M. on 9 Mar (SD), 1 at Big Creek S.P. on 19 Mar (SD), and 1 at Laurens on 25 Apr (RVH).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Singles were in Sioux City on 1 Mar (BH), at Big Creek S.P. on 19 Mar (SD), and at Grammer Grove on 1 Apr (MPr). Most interesting were calling birds at Lansing W.A. on 6 May (FL) and at Yellow River F. on 28 May (*FLM). This species nests in similar geologic terrain in nearby Wisconsin.

Common Nighthawk: First report was of 4 at Glenwood on 7 May (DoR).

Chuck-will's-Widow: Reported from the usual SW Iowa spots, with 5 at Waubonsie S.P. on 14 May (DoR). Unusual was 1 heard calling near Melvin, Osceola Co., on 24 May (DCH).

Whip-poor-will: 1 was in Mills Co. on 11 Apr (DoR) [ties record earliest].

Chimney Swift: 6 were at Keokuk on 10 Apr (RCe) [record earliest]. Another was early at Hendrickson M. on 13 Apr (SD).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: First was 1 in Iowa City on 3 May (JF).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Several observers commented that they saw fewer than usual this spring. Peak was 10 at Hickory Hill P. on 10 Apr (THK).

Northern Flicker: 1 of the Red-shafted race was at Laurens on 30 Mar (RVH).

Pileated Woodpecker: Only report was 1 at Grammer Grove on 1 Apr (MPr).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 1 was calling at Woodland Mounds, Warren Co., on 13 Apr (*JSi) [record earliest]. Last were 3 at Grammer Grove on 28 May (MPr).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Details were given for 1 at Bays Branch on 7 May (THK) [2nd earliest]; 7 others were described from across the state between 7 and 28 May.

Acadian Flycatcher: Singles were found at Amana Woods on 13 May (THK, CJB, FLM), L. Ahquabi on 11 May (JSi), and Boone Co. on 16 May (EM). Peak was 6 at Yellow River F. on 28 May (FLM).

Alder Flycatcher: Many were reported this spring; 3 were in Dallas Co. on 15 May (RKM) [2nd earliest]. Peak was 6 at Ledges S.P. on 22 May (SD). All birds were identified by call.

Willow Flycatcher: 2 were identified by call at Dunbar Sl. on 16 May (RKM).

Least Flycatcher: 1 was a little early at L. Manawa on 3 May (BPa, BLW).

Eastern Phoebe: First was 1 at Saylorville Res. on 22 Mar (SD). Others were a little early with 1 at Pine L. on 25 Mar (MPr) and 4 at Harper's Ferry on 26 Mar (MJH).

Vermillion Flycatcher: One report is referred to Records Committee.

Western Kingbird: Usual reports from western edge of state included 2 in Lyon Co. on 23 May (DCH) and 3 in Fremont Co. on 24 May (SD); 1 was somewhat more east at Cherokee on 15 May (MMB) and another a little further east in Greene Co. on 13 May (MPr).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: 1 was in Dallas Co. on 6 May (EIA, details).

Horned Lark: 2 fledglings were seen in Mills Co. on 28 Apr (BLW).

Purple Martin: 1 was early at L. Manawa on 31 Mar (BPa). The most reported was 8 at West Okoboji on 14 Apr (JJ). Several observers commented on low numbers.

Tree Swallow: 1 was at Big Sand Mound on 20 Mar (PCP) [ties 3rd earliest]. Also early were 4 at Saylorville Res. on 22 Mar (SD).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Early birds were 2 at L. Manawa on 9 Apr (BPa, LPa) and 5 at Walton L. in Fairfield on 10 Apr (DCP).

Cliff Swallow: First was 1 at L. Manawa on 3 May (BPa). There were few reports this year.

Barn Swallow: First was 1 at Walton L. on 3 Apr (DCP).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: The only two reports were 1 in Iowa City on 29 Apr (JF) and 1 at Ledges S.P. on 7 May (MPR).

Brown Creeper: 3 were acting territorial in Des Moines Co. on 19 May (PCP).

Carolina Wren: Several were reported from the usual SE Iowa locations. More unusual was 1 at Grammer Grove on 3 May (BPr) and a pair on nest with 5 young in Boone Co. on 23 May (EM). Most unusual were 2 at New Haven Potholes, Mitchell Co., on 15 Apr (MJH).

Bewick's Wren: 1 was observed at Shimek F. on 15 and 18 May (*RCe, *JF).

Winter Wren: The only report was of 2 at Grammer Grove on 16 Apr (MPR).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Largest numbers were reported from the second week in Apr with 4 in Mitchell Co. on 9 Apr (MJH) and 5 at Hickory Hill P. on 10 Apr (THK).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Peak was 10 at Hickory Hill P. on 10 Apr (THK).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 6 were at Shimek F. on 9 Apr (RCe) [2nd earliest]. The peak was 21 at Shimek F. on 21 May (RCe).

Eastern Bluebird: Numbers were thought to be up in NW Iowa (DCH). Other observers also reported good populations in other parts of the state.

Veery: First was 1 at Grammer Grove on 4 May (MPR). Another was at Ledges S.P. on 13 May (MPR); 2 remained at Saylorville Res. on 29 May (BE).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: 1 was early at Laurens on 29 Apr (RVH).

Swainson's Thrush: Several observers commented about good numbers seen this spring.

Hermit Thrush: First was 1 at Laurens on 28 Mar (RVH). Peak was 15 at Grammer Grove on 23 Apr (MPR); 1 was getting late at Cone M. on 30 Apr (THK, details).

Northern Mockingbird: All reports were between 3 and 30 May and were from Appanoose, Boone, Cass, Page, Polk, and Van Buren counties.

Water Pipit: 1 was at Big Creek S.P. on 11 Mar (SD) [3rd earliest]; 4 at Coralville Res. on 13 Mar (JF) were also very early. Peak was 44 at Riverton A. on 27 Mar (SD). Last were 2 at Rush L., Palo Alto Co., on 5 May (MMB).

Northern Shrike: 1 was found at Hendrickson M. on 5 Mar (HZ), and 1 was at Big Creek on 20 Mar (SD).

Loggerhead Shrike: First was 1 at Big Creek on 6 Mar (JSi). An incredible 73 active nests were found in Adair Co. (Dave DeGeus fide SD).

White-eyed Vireo: 10 were reported. First was 1 at Hickory Hill P. on 2 May (THK); 1 was north of normal range near Elma on 4 May (MJH).

Bell's Vireo: 2 were at Big Creek S.P. on 29 Apr (SD) [2nd earliest]. Peak was 3 at Riverton A. on 14 May (DoR). A nest with four eggs was found near Fairfield on 30 May (*DCP).

Solitary Vireo: 1 was early near Fairfield on 25 Apr (DCP). Another was found in Hickory Hill P. on 29 Apr (JF).

Warbling Vireo: 1 was early at Big Creek S.P. on 29 Apr (SD).

Philadelphia Vireo: Peak was 4 at Grammer Grove on 16 May (BPr).

Blue-winged Warbler: First was 1 at Shimek F. on 26 Apr (RCe). Other reports included 1 at Amana Woods on 30 Apr (THK), 1 at Ledges S.P. on 7 May (MPR), and 1 in Lee Co. on 28 May (DoR).

Golden-winged Warbler: There were many reports this year. First were 2 at A. A. Call S.P., Kossuth Co., on 3 May (MCK); 1 was late at Ledges S.P. on 22 May (SD).

Tennessee Warbler: Last was 1 in Ames on 31 May (EM).

Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 was in Appanoose Co. on 19 Apr (RLC) [ties 3rd earliest]. Also early was 1 at Hickory Hill P. on 23 Apr (THK); 1 was late at Cone M. on 16 May (FLM).

Northern Parula: Several reports were from the usual S Iowa locations. A report from the north had 1 at Smiths Sl., Clay Co., on 11 May (DCH).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: Peak was 4 at Grammer Grove on 14 May (MPR); 1 was still at Cardinal M. on 30 May (FLM).

Cape May Warbler: Eight reports received from four C and four E Iowa locations. All were singles and all seen between 4 May and 15 May.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: First was 1 near Booneville on 24 Mar (EaA). Peak was 50 at Coralville Res. on 23 Apr (THK); 1 of the Audubon's race was captured, photographed, and banded at Laurens on 28 Apr (RVH).

Townsend's Warbler: A report is referred to the Records Committee.

Black-throated Green Warbler: Few reports were received. Peak was 4 at Pine L. on 6 May (MPR).

Blackburnian Warbler: 13 were reported between 7 and 17 May. Peak was 6 in Mitchell Co. on 11 May (MJH).

Yellow-throated Warbler: 1 was at Ledges S.P. on 12 Apr (SD) [2nd earliest]. Birds were at the usual SE Iowa and Ledges S.P. locations; new locations included 3 at Saylorville Res. on 6 May (BE) and a singing male at Pine Lake S.P. on 27 May (MPR).

Pine Warbler: 1 was at Grammer Grove on 10 May (*BPr).

Prairie Warbler: 1 singing male was found at Yellow River F. on 28 May (*FLM).

Palm Warbler: Peak was 5 at Grammer Grove on 3 May (BPr) and at Pine Lake S.P. on 3 May (MPR).

Bay-breasted Warbler: 1 at Hickory Hill P. on 2 May (JF) [2nd earliest]. Others include 2 at Grammer Grove on 18 May (MPR) and 3 in Cerro Gordo Co. on 22 May (RLC).

Blackpoll Warbler: First was 1 at Pine Lake S.P. on 3 May (MPR).

Cerulean Warbler: 3 were found in Boone Co. on 23 May (EM); 5 were singing at Saylorville Res. on 29 May (BE).

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 was in Appanoose Co. on 10 Apr (RLC) [3rd earliest].

Prothonotary Warbler: 25 were reported in May. Peaks were 3 in Polk Co. on 6 May (BE), 3 at Riverton A. on 24 May (SD), and 12 in Des Moines Co. on 19 May (PCP).

Worm-eating Warbler: All reports: 1 in Shimek F. on 26 Apr (RCe) [ties 3rd earliest], 4 in Shimek F. on 6 May (THK, RCe, JF), 1 at Ledges S.P. on 8 May (RKM), and 1 at Waubonsie S.P. on 14 May (DoR).

Northern Waterthrush: 1 in NW Iowa on 9 May (MMB) may have been a little uncommon for that area.

Louisiana Waterthrush: 4 were early at Shimek F. on 5 Apr (RCe) as were 2 at Ledges S.P. on 9 Apr (MPR). Peak was 12 at Shimek F. on 28 May (RCe); 2 were seen lining a nest in Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. on 31 May (DCP).

Kentucky Warbler: Reports were from Shimek F. on 1 May (RCe), Ledges S.P. on 11 May (MPR), Dudgeon L. on 14 May (JF), and Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. on 18 May (JF).

Connecticut Warbler: 8 were reported from 17 to 28 May. All reports were from C and E Iowa except for 1 in Sioux City on 25 May (BH). All reports were singles except for 2 at Grammer Grove on 17 May (BPr).

Mourning Warbler: 1 was early at Grammer Grove on 8 May (BPr). Peaks were 9 in Boone Co. on 15 May (SD) and 12 at Dudgeon L. on 16 May (JF).

Hooded Warbler: All reports: 1 at Brookside P. on 10 May (PM), 1 at Ledges S.P. on 15 May (SD), 1 at Dudgeon L. on 17 May (JF), 1 in Shimek F. on 23 May (RCe), a pair on territory at Yellow River F. on 28 May (FLM), 1 at Browns Woods in SW Des Moines on 29 May (RKM), and 1 in Warren Co. on 29 May (JSi). All were males except for the female at Yellow River F.

Wilson's Warbler: 1 was in Davenport on 3 May (PCP) [ties 3rd earliest]; 1 was late at Big Wall L. on 26 May (SD).

Canada Warbler: Few reports were received. Peak was 3 at Grammer Grove on 14 May (MPR).

Yellow-breasted Chat: 22 were reported in May; 1 was in Shimek F. on 5 May (RCe) [ties 2nd earliest]. Peak was 10 in Lee Co. on 28 May (RCe). Reports were from C, E, and SE Iowa.

Summer Tanager: Other reports in addition to the usual Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. and Waubonsie S.P. locations were 1 at Dudgeon L. on 17 May (JF), 1 near Oakville on 19 May (PCP), and 1 at Lime Creek N.C., Cerro Gordo Co., on 22 May (RCe).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 was early at Cone M. on 30 Apr (THK).

Blue Grosbeak: Steve Dinsmore reports many in W Iowa in late May; 11 were found in Fremont Co. on 24 May (SD, DoR).

Indigo Bunting: First was 1 in Tama on 3 May (NAK).

Dickcissel: Details were given for 1 near Hendrickson M. on 16 Apr (PM) [ties 2nd earliest]; also early were 2 at Cone M. on 30 Apr (THK).

Chipping Sparrow: 2 were at Riverton A. on 27 Mar (SD) [record earliest]; 1 in Iowa City on 4 Apr (RJH) was also very early.

Clay-colored Sparrow: First was 1 in Hickory Hill P. on 29 Apr (JF). Peak was 7 at Big Wall L. on 10 May (SD).

Vesper Sparrow: First were 2 near L. Manawa on 7 Apr (BP, BLW).

Lark Sparrow: The few reports this spring included 1 at Liscomb on 4 May (MPR) and 1 in Tama Co. on 11 May (NAK).

Henslow's Sparrow: 1 was at Cayler Prairie on 17 Apr (*JP) [3rd earliest]. Many birders got to see the 1-2 birds at Lime Creek N.C. during I.O.U. spring meeting in Mason City on 22 May (*RCe, *BLW, *RJH).

Le Conte's Sparrow: 1 was early at Doolittle Prairie on 1 Apr (SD). All other reports were from mid- to late Apr except for 1 in Scott Co. on May 6 (PCP).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Details were provided for 2 seen and heard at Snake Creek M., Greene Co., on 23 May (RKM).

Fox Sparrow: Only a few were mentioned; 1 was at Walton L. on 23 Apr (DCP) [ties 3rd latest].

Swamp Sparrow: First were 8 at Runnells Game A. on 19 Mar (JSi).

Dark-eyed Junco: Last was 1 at L. MacBride on 23 Apr (THK).

Lapland Longspur: Several contributors commented that they saw none; 10 were found near Elma on 7 Apr and 100 were there on 19 Apr (MJH).

Smith's Longspur: Details supplied for 17 in Polk Co. on 5 Apr (SD); 150 were in S Johnson Co. on 5 Apr (JF), and up to 200 were found at Cone M. from 6 to 30 Apr (*THK) [2nd latest].

Bobolink: 1 was in Tama Co. on 2 May [3rd earliest]. Many were reported in Lyon Co. on 10 May (DCH).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: First was 1 at Anderson L. on 30 Mar (Darryl Kroeker fide JJD); 16 were found in Greene Co. on 9 Apr (SD). Peak was 100 at Otter Creek M. on 4 May (NAK).

Rusty Blackbird: 18 were noted in Appanoose Co. on 26 Mar (RLC); 2 females were at Swan L., Johnson Co., on 23 Apr (THK) [3rd latest].

Brewer's Blackbird: 2 were near Malvern on 6 Mar (SD, details) and 4 were at Cone M. on 6 Apr (*THK).

Great-tailed Grackle: Three undocumented reports included 1 near Thurmon on 19 Mar (EuA, ElA), 1 near Council Bluffs on 14 Apr (Bruce Wetteroth fide BLW), and 1 near Hamburg on 14 May (DoR).

Common Grackle: An estimated 200,000 were in Lee Co. on 17 Mar (RCe).

Orchard Oriole: Reports included 2 at Fairfield on 6 May (DCP), 1 at Ledges S.P. on 7 May (MPR), and 2 in Sioux City on 15 May (JJ).

Northern Oriole: 1 was early in Algona on 29 Apr (MCK).

House Finch: This species is becoming well established over all of Iowa with eleven reports listing 24 birds. A male at Larchwood on 13 May (*DCH) was the first for the NW corner of the state. A nest with four eggs was found at Cherokee on 17 Apr (DBi, MMB).

Red Crossbill: Reported in good numbers from seven locations. Largest numbers were 30 in Des Moines on 13 Mar (LP), up to 20 at Big Sand Mound between 1 Mar-13 May (PCP), 15 in Spencer on 25 Mar (MMB), and 10 at Iowa City on 20 Mar (THK, JF).

White-winged Crossbill: 1 was seen at an Iowa City feeder on 17 and 20 Mar (JF, THK).

Common Redpoll: 1 was near Elma on 4 Mar (MJH), and 2 were at L. Hendricks, Howard Co., on 11 Mar (MJH). Several were regularly coming to a feeder in Spencer and were last seen on 2 May (EK) [record latest].

Pine Siskin: 2 were seen carrying nesting material in Burlington on 18 Apr (Elizabeth Christiansen fide RCe). Last were 2 in Iowa City on 24 May (JF) and several at Ames in late May (SD).

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* = documentation only.

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COMMENT

Thank you to all contributors for your excellent reports this season. Forty-nine contributors sent reports or documentations. Without your efforts there

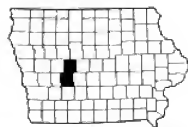
would be no need for a Field Reports Editor and because of your efforts my task is much easier. Most reports were neat, on time, in taxonomic order, and almost everyone provided documentations or details for sightings requiring them.

After putting a lot of work into field reports it is sometimes disheartening for the contributor not to see some sightings listed in *Iowa Bird Life*. These omitted sightings have not been overlooked, but because of size limitations and because of the incredible amount of information that is sent in, all sightings cannot possibly be listed. Editors must try to determine patterns, pick out early and late dates, observe peaks, and draw out other especially useful bits of information from a large group of sight records for each species. This is not always easy. A sight record may also be omitted if details of the observation or a documentation was required and not furnished. Also, because of deadlines, reports received late often cannot be incorporated. I try to list these late reporters along with other contributors, even though I have not used their information in my compilation, so they can at least get some credit for their efforts.

Contributors: keep up the good work!

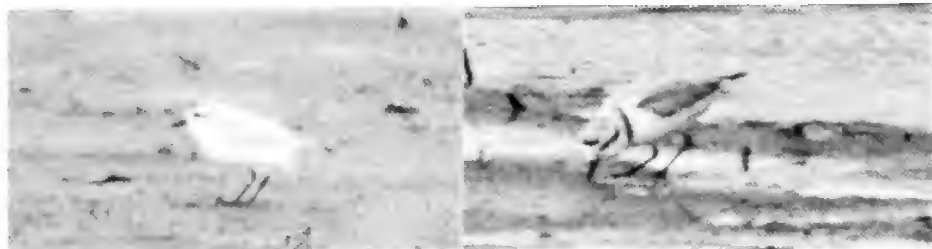
SNOWY PLOVERS IN CENTRAL IOWA

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE AND ANDREW S. FIX



Snowy Plover is an uncommon and local species that breeds along the Gulf Coast from Florida to Texas, along the West Coast north to Washington, and locally in the interior north to Kansas, Colorado, Utah, and Oregon (American Ornithologists' Union. 1983. *Check-list of North American Birds*, 6th Edition). Snowy Plovers are vagrants north and east of their range, with most records from April to July. In the last five years, there are records from British Columbia, Saskatchewan (4), Wyoming, Nebraska, Minnesota (2), Illinois (2), Ontario, and Pennsylvania. There are no previous records from Iowa.

At noon on 6 May 1988, Dinsmore noticed a very pale shorebird feeding with other shorebirds at Bays Branch in Guthrie County. The size, posture, and behavior were that of a plover, most likely a Piping Plover. At 1:34 p.m., after approaching closely and observing the bird for several minutes, he identified it as a Snowy Plover. The bird was about the same size and shape as nearby Semipalmated Plovers. The upperparts, including the back, wings, and tail, were pale brown, much paler than the nearby Semipalmated Plovers. The underparts and undertail were white. A black bar, about an inch long, angled forward and downward from each shoulder. The head was pale except for a black patch on the forehead and black auricular patches. The bill and legs were black. The bill seemed slightly longer and slimmer than the bill of a Semipalmated Plover. In flight, the bird had a light wing stripe and the rump was the same color as the rest of the upperparts. Several other birders saw the bird on the afternoon of the 6th and morning of the 7th, but it could not be located after that.



Snowy Plover, Bays Branch, 6 May 1988. Photos by T. H. Kent.

On 22 May 1988, Dinsmore and Fix were doing a Big Day Count in central Iowa. At 2:56 p.m., Fix noticed a pale shorebird feeding with other shorebirds in the southwest corner of Dunbar Slough in Greene County. He initially thought that it was a Piping Plover, but we quickly noticed the dark bill and legs and identified it as a Snowy Plover. We watched the bird until 3:14 p.m. During this time Fix photographed the bird. The bird was similar in appearance to the one at Bays Branch, although we noted that it appeared smaller and slimmer than nearby Semipalmated Plovers.

Dinsmore made an extensive search of the area the next morning. The number of shorebirds was greatly reduced, and the plover was not found. It was, however, reportedly seen briefly on the 25 May by Brian Blevins.

These sightings represent the first reports of Snowy Plover in Iowa. We thought that the birds were different individuals, but this cannot be proven with certainty.

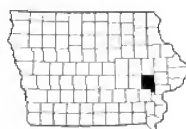


*Snowy Plover, Dunbar Slough, 22 May 1988.
Photo by Andrew S. Fix*

4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

CURLEW SANDPIPER AT CORALVILLE RESERVOIR

CARL J. BENDORF AND THOMAS H. KENT



On 13 May, we were doing a Big Day Count with Francis Moore and Dick Tetrault. At 12:55 p.m. we arrived at an old backwater lake, known as Crescent or Half Moon Lake, which lies south of the DuPont Bridge at the west end of the Coralville Reservoir, Johnson County. From the back seat, Bendorf happened to look through the willow trees that ring the edge of water and saw a small duck sitting on a log. He yelled for the car to stop and put his binoculars a Green-winged Teal, a new species for the day. He also noticed a few shorebirds feeding in the grass just behind the teal. They were probing deeply and at least one seemed to have all red underparts. Bendorf mentioned that there seemed to be dowitchers to look at.



*Curlew Sandpiper, Coralville Reservoir,
13 May 1988. Photos by T.H.Kent.*



Stilt, Pectoral, and Curlew sandpipers.

Everyone climbed out of the car and Bendorf set his scope at the water's edge. He saw Pectoral and a few Stilt sandpipers, and one bird facing away that seemed mostly red underneath with white patchiness in the vent. He figured this might be a Short-billed Dowitcher. When the bird turned sideways, the first impression of body shape and bill was more like that of a Stilt Sandpiper. However, this bird actually seemed quite unfamiliar and he mentioned that it really looked like a Curlew Sandpiper. After this, Kent decided that he better take a look, and he agreed that this was indeed something unusual. As we studied the bird through scopes, Bendorf dictated the following notes:

This is a bird about the same size or perhaps slightly larger than a Pectoral Sandpiper. It is feeding, probing quite deeply in a very similar fashion to the pectorals, standing belly deep in the water and keeping its head down. The bill is longer than a pectoral in direct comparison and all black. It also has a nicely decurved bill over the entire length, not just the tip. The bill is rather thick at the base and narrows to a rather sharp tip. The sides of the head have a bit of a rufous wash. The top of the head and back of the neck is very finely streaked brown. The scapulars and wing coverts are very broadly edged with rufous and what looks like the median wing coverts are more edged with white. The greater wing covert area is whiter than the other coverts. The tertials are brown centered with rufous edging. The throat, breast and belly down to about even with the legs is a rich rusty color and this turns into patchy white in the vent area. It appears to have a rather distinct white superciliary.

Next we carefully walked around the edge of the water to the side the bird was on and approached within about 15 yards. Kent slowly walked even closer and took several photos. Several times the bird stopped feeding, briefly preened and raised its wings overhead for a moment. Bendorf recorded the following additional notes:

We have now moved around to the west side of the bird and we notice that this bird has very rich chestnut and white edging on the back feathers. It also has white at the base of the bill, mainly below and on the sides and not so much on top. When it's preening, you can see the white rump. The bird is smaller than a Stilt Sandpiper right next to it. The rufous underneath has white bars in it at the flanks. It also has a distinct white eye ring. Some of this eye ring is what made the superciliary seem more noticeable from a distance. It continues to feed quite actively. Several times when it lifted its wings briefly it has pure white underwings and axillars. The rufous color underneath is not quite as bright as a male robin, perhaps more like a female robin. The bird just poked at a Pectoral Sandpiper and chased it away.

We watched the bird until 1:30 pm. When we left, the bird was still there and we spent a half-hour getting to a phone in North Liberty to make some calls.

This was our first experience with this species. Moore was the only observer of Iowa's other Curlew Sandpiper, a similar appearing bird seen on 10 May 1985 at Nashua (*Iowa Bird Life* 55:72). Our identification seemed fairly

straightforward as Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Red Knot, and both dowitchers are all eliminated by the combination of evenly decurved bill, rufous underparts, and white rump. The description and illustrations in *Shorebirds* by Hayman, Marchant, and Prater suggest that this bird was a breeding plumage female. On the female, the face is less rufous, the superciliary is whiter, and the barring on the flanks is more distinct. The habitat description also fits, "Outside breeding season prefers muddy, poorly-vegetated wetland fringes, both inland and coastal..."

Curlew Sandpiper has a relatively localized breeding range on the tundra of northcentral Siberia. The only proven or suspected North American breeding records are from Barrow, Alaska, in 1962, 1972, 1973, and 1974. In contrast to the relatively narrow breeding range this species migrates across most of the world and winters from New Zealand and Australia to southern Asia to western and southern Africa. The spring and fall movement in North America suggests that it must also winter in South America in small numbers.

We found about 150 North American records of Curlew Sandpiper through 1986 in *Audubon Field Notes/American Birds* and bird books of various states. The first record from Alaska in 1883 was followed by six more at various locations from 1936 to 1957. Over the last three decades the average number of North American records has dramatically increased from 1.5 to 5.9 to 8.9 per year. The widespread distribution over North America can be summarized as follows: East Coast (40%), West Coast (30%), central United States and Canada (23%), Gulf Coast (8%), and Alaska (7%). There is also one record from Hawaii. Two-thirds of the inland records are from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ontario. The rest are widely scattered from Pennsylvania to Alberta and Kansas to Manitoba.

By month, the records are distributed as follows: February (1%), March (1%), April (5%), May (20%), June (5%), July (22%), August (17%), September (11%), October (11%), November (3%), and December (1%). This pattern is similar to that of many North American shorebirds that breed on the tundra and winter in South America, with spring migration peak in May and adults migrating south in July-August and juveniles following in August-November. The weighting of sightings toward fall is consistent with longer migration time (more likely to be seen) and addition of juveniles to the population. The migration pattern of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, another Asian vagrant that has a breeding distribution similar to Curlew Sandpiper, presents an interesting contrast. Most Sharp-tailed Sandpipers winter in Australia, New Zealand, and nearby islands; most of the North American records are of juveniles in fall, with only a few apparently returning as adults in spring. From the number of spring sightings of Curlew Sandpiper it would appear that the Western Hemisphere is a regular, albeit small, part of the wintering range of this species.

825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240

REVIEWS

A Field Guide To Hawks Of North America by William S. Clark and Brian K. Wheeler. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1987. 198 pp, hardbound \$19.95, paper-bound \$13.95.

REVIEWED BY DANIEL E. VARLAND

This field guide, number 35 in the Peterson Field Guide series, covers the 33 regular and 6 accidental species of North American diurnal raptors. The major groups include the buteos, eagles, falcons, kites, accipiters, vultures, harriers (1 species), and ospreys (1 species). Hawks enjoy broad appeal among bird enthusiasts, despite the challenges inherent in their field identification. The wide array of plumages, the close resemblance among species in some hawk groups, and the elusive nature of these birds can confound even the most skilled field observer. The primary purpose of this field guide is to provide current, detailed information on field marks and behavioral characteristics for use in field identification. The writer (Clark) and illustrator (Wheeler) drew on their considerable field experience, their work with museum specimens, and the input of other raptor specialists for the preparation of this book. The text provides a written account of each of the 39 species. These species accounts describe, in detail, immature and adult plumage and the plumage of various color morphs. In addition, each account addresses behavior and flight patterns, status and distribution, body measurements, and similar species. Range maps are included for each of the 33 regular species. Twenty-six plates are grouped in the center of the text. All but two are in color. The illustrations depict subspecies and immature and adult plumage of each species. Similar species and like color morphs are grouped together. While the emphasis is placed on illustrating birds in flight, many perched birds are also shown.

Wheeler does a good job of capturing the essence of each species in his illustrations. My only criticism is that, in flight, many of the illustrations show the main body outline with an uncharacteristic torpedo-shape. Forty-two pages of black-and-white photos near the end of the text supplement the plate illustrations. Most of these birds are shown in flight, and important field marks are labeled. A number of these photos, however, are blurred or too dark, making the labeled field marks difficult to see.

A reference section at the end of the text includes articles on a wide variety of subjects including identification, natural history, and status and distribution. The section is organized alphabetically by author and then re-organized by species and topic.

Overall, I give *A Field Guide to Hawks of North America* high marks, and I recommend it to anyone who has an interest in raptors. This book will prove an excellent resource for hawk identification, and will provide the reader with a wealth of additional information on this fascinating avian group.

3905 Ontario St., Ames, IA 50010

Hawks in Flight by Pete Dunn, David Sibley, and Clay Sutton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1988. 254 pp., hard cover, \$17.95.

REVIEWED BY THOMAS. H. KENT

The authors' claim that this is a unique field guide not designed to be carried into the field sounds like nonsense until one has read the book. The authors forgo the usual encyclopedic approach of most field guides and look at hawk identification from the standpoint of a field observer watching hawks in migration. In fact, hawks that reach only the southern parts of the United States are not covered.

After brief introductory chapters, the book is divided into chapters on buteos, accipiters, falcons, kites, harrier, eagles and vultures, and osprey. The migration pattern, generic features of each group, and how to tell members of the group from other groups precede a description of the features of each species. Emphasis is on identifying hawks at a distance by shape, behavior, and key field marks. Color is considered so unimportant that the book contains only pen-and-ink drawings and black-and-white photographs. The elegant drawings compare various species, immatures and adults, dark- and light-phased birds, and shape under various wind conditions. The 78 pages of photographs at the back of the book provide many examples.

The authors have had many years' experience identifying migrating hawks at a distance at hawk watches. Reading the book from cover to cover taught me a lot about subtle points of hawk identification. Now that I am familiar with the book, it will be a useful "field guide". This book and the more encyclopedic *A Field Guide to Hawks of North America* by Clark and Wheeler provide much needed resources on hawk identification and nicely complement each other.

211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

I.O.U. BUSINESS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Amana, 28 February 1988, 10:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

ANN M. BARKER, SECRETARY

Members Present: Jim Dinsmore (presiding), Eugene Armstrong, Ann Barker, Beth Brown, Bob Cecil, Francis Moore, and Carol Thompson.

Minutes: The minutes of the meetings of 7 November 1987 and 15 November 1987 were approved as circulated.

Treasurer's Report

Moore distributed copies of the financial statements for 1985, 1986, and 1987, as well as a proposed budget for 1988. For 1987, membership revenue exceeded publication costs, publications have been under budget, and there was an excess of general revenues over expenses of \$1,876.89. Thompson pointed out that membership revenue should cover publication and committee expenses. It was moved (Barker, seconded by Brown) to approve the financial statement. Passed. Motion was made (Armstrong, seconded by Cecil) to adopt the budget as revised. Passed.

Committee Reports

Publications: The committee met at Luther in November. It was decided to place at least one book review in each issue of *Iowa Bird Life*.

Library/Historical: The committee has not met.

Membership: The committee has not met. In 1987, we fell slightly short of our membership goal of 500. The new brochure and checklist are the major tools of the membership committee. Ideas are needed to promote membership. Dinsmore encouraged members to hand out brochures at any talks given, state fair, county conservation boards, etc. The committee will consider a publicity plan including possible radio spots and newspaper articles. The brochure needs to be reprinted; the board felt that three to four thousand should be printed.

Records: A meeting was held at Luther in November at which all records for 1987 were finished.

Nominating: The committee composed of Carl Bendorf, Ray Cummins, and Jim Fuller has prepared a slate of officers and board members for the spring meeting. Their report will be published in the next newsletter.

Big day: The committee is composed of Ray Cummins (chair), Tom Kent, and Eugene Armstrong. Again, information will be published in the upcoming newsletter.

Education: This committee composed of Linda Zaletel (chair), Rick Hollis, Bernie Knight, and Laura Jackson will meet in late March or April.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Thompson stated that the committee met in November and made a full report at the fall meeting. Publication of results could be undertaken by either the Iowa State University Press or the University of Iowa Press, both of which have volunteered to cover costs if the manuscript is accepted. Thompson indicated that the new atlas cards are out. Four block busting trips have been scheduled for consecutive weekends in June, in each of the four quadrants of the state. Further information will be published in the next newsletter. The committee plans to begin contacting outside funding sources.

Old Business

Dinsmore indicated that a thank you letter has been received from Dan Varland for the research grant which he received from the I.O.U. New stationery has been printed and more envelopes will be needed. Dinsmore led a short discussion on the use of our logo. The plan is to use it for official matters of the union only, such as newsletters, journals, and stationery.

The fall 1987 meeting looks like it will break even financially. The spring 1988 meeting arrangements are set for Mason City. The fall 1988 meeting had been tentatively set for the Fort Dodge area. However, Bill Cunningham, who was to have been in charge of arrangements, has now moved from the area. Tom Tierney of the local Sierra Club has indicated that his group still wished to host the meeting. The board agreed. The meeting will be held in early September, probably at a church camp. The board would like a report on the local arrangements at the spring meeting. There has been no invitation yet for the spring 1989 meeting. One possibility discussed was the Lakeside Lab at Spirit Lake. A planning meeting is scheduled for next fall for the spring 1990 meeting, a tri-state convention at La Crosse, Wisconsin, with the M.O.U. and W.S.O. Carl Bendorf is our representative. Bendorf suggested that we should be thinking about presenting programs on Iowa birds.

New Business

Dinsmore presented the idea of T-shirts to be sold as a fund raiser. These could be available at the spring meeting for a \$6.00 charge. The board was in agreement that we should proceed with this plan. The board will hold a short meeting at Mason City during the spring meeting. This was tentatively set for Sunday noon.